



Solidarity

For social ownership of the banks and industry

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LET THEM IN

Europe's refugee "crisis" could be solved easily. Let them all in! Wealthy Europe could easily welcome several million refugees and integrate them into its 500-million-plus population.

All those who need to come to the EU should be provided with a safe passage out of the Middle East and African war zones, and an adequate living in Europe.

Instead, European governments are increasingly resorting to reintroducing border controls between EU states, attacking migrants at flashpoints such as Calais, and trying to seal the EU's external borders.

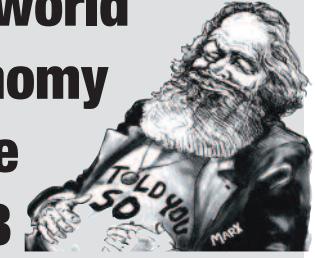
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Monthly pull-out

The world economy since 2008



Martin Thomas assesses the continuing impacts of the 2008 economic crash and the prospects of a "third leg" of the crisis.

How capitalism is killing you

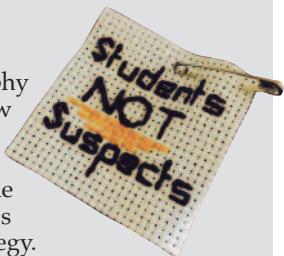
CAPITALISM KILLS

How inequality blights your life.

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Why and how to oppose Prevent

Patrick Murphy discusses how socialists should respond to the Government's Prevent strategy.



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Join Labour!

Labour activists get on the streets to support junior doctors

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Putin: a model of reactionary politics

By Anne Field

The report of Britain's official Owen Inquiry into the 2006 murder of former Russian security service agent Alexander Litvinenko was published on 21 January. It attributed responsibility for the murder to Russia's President Vladimir Putin.

Putin ruled Russia as its President from 2000 to 2008. Barred by the constitution from seeking a third successive term of office, Putin was nominally Prime Minister between 2008 and 2012. In reality, he remained the ultimate source of authority in Russia.

Amid widespread allegations of ballot-rigging, Putin was re-elected President for six years in 2012. (The presidential term of office had been increased from four to six years while Putin was Prime Minister). He is already on record as saying that he will seek re-election in 2018.

From the outset Putin's rule has been based on "siloviki" (strongmen): former KGB agents and serving agents of the police and the FSB (the Russian successor to the KGB), and former and serving military commanders.

According to a survey carried out by Olga Kryshtanovskaya in 2004, "siloviki" constituted around 25% of Russia's political elite, and over 50% of Putin's inner circle. Their influence has continued to grow since then.

Putin himself is a former KGB agent. But, as Kryshtanovskaya wrote:

"Putin brought 'siloviki' with him. But that's not enough to understand the situation. The whole political class wished them to come. There was a need of a strong arm, capable from point of view of the elite to establish order in the country."

One of Putin's first acts was to incorporate Russia's 89 regions into seven new federal districts.

The districts are run by appointees personally selected by



Anti-Putin demonstration, 2012

Putin as his representatives. They have control over the armed forces, the budgets and activities of the regional governors in their districts. Five of the first seven appointees were "siloviki".

At the same time Putin weakened the powers of the Federation Council, the upper chamber of the Russian Parliament with representation from the country's different regions.

Putin also scrapped the election of regional governors (they too were to be personally appointed by Putin) and empowered local legislatures (dominated in practice by Putin's supporters) to sack popularly elected mayors.

Over the past decade and a half potential sources of opposition to Putin's rule in civil society have been attacked, one after another.

The media empires run by the oligarchs Vladimir Gusinsky and Boris Berezovsky were both effectively taken over by Putin and their owners forced to flee Russia.

Dissident journalists have been sacked, programmes critical of Putin have been taken off the air,

and attempts to create independent television channels blocked by the government. The only surviving independent channel is now run from an apartment in Moscow.

Under a law signed off by Putin in 2014, international organisations, foreigners and Russians with dual citizenship will be banned from owning mass media outlets by the end of 2016. Its main target is *Vedomosti*, jointly published by the *Financial Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*.

The internet in Russia is controlled by the government agency Roskomnadzor, created in 2012. Russian bloggers with 3,000 or more visitors a day have to register with Roskomnadzor, reveal their identities, and verify the accuracy of their blogs.

Roskomnadzor can also block websites which "refuse to follow Russian laws", which carry "extremist" political content, or which "encourage illegal activities and participation in public events held in violation of the established order."

Foreign-funded non-governmen-

tal organisations (NGOs), described by Putin as "jackals" and "Judases", have been singled out for repressive legislation.

They are required to register as "foreign agents", submit quarterly reports on their funds and resources, and submit six-monthly reports on their personnel and activities. They are also subject to mandatory audits and can be fined for publishing anything not described as having been published by "a foreign agent".

In the spring of 2013 alone, 2,000 NGOs, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, were raided by government authorities.

After a wave of protests at Putin's decision to seek re-election as President in 2012, he increased fines for taking part in unauthorised protests to 300,000 rubles, and fines for organising such protests to a million rubles.

In 2014 Putin ramped up the penalties yet again. Repeated participation in unauthorised protests now attracts a penalty of up to a million rubles and up to five years of forced labour or prison.

A law passed in 2013 banned the "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relationships to minors". Breaches of the law could result in fines or imprisonment. The following year another law banned all swearwords in films, on television and in theatre performances.

And last year new rules for licensing the showing of films were introduced, banning films which "defile the national culture, pose a threat to national unity, and undermine the foundations of the constitutional order."

Other laws have obstructed the registration of "non-indigenous religions" and prevented them from acquiring land and building permits. This has benefited the religious monopoly enjoyed by the Russian Orthodox Church, described by Putin as one of the two "pillars" of national and state secu-

rity. The other "pillar" is nuclear deterrence.

Reflecting Putin's own views on Stalin ("his legacy cannot be judged in black and white"), Russia adopted Stalin's national anthem (with different lyrics) in 2000, and Russian textbooks now explain that while the Stalinist and post-Stalinist USSR was not a democracy, it was "an example for millions of people around the world of the best and fairest society."

Putin has also regularly contrasted his authoritarian conservatism with western "decadence", denouncing the west as "genderless and infertile" and guilty of "the destruction of traditional values from the top."

ALLIANCES

This has provided a basis for political alliances between Putin and parties of the European far right: the French National Front, the Hungarian Jobbik, the Bulgarian Attack, the Slovak People's Party, and various far-right parties in Germany.

Putin's endorsement of Donald Trump for US president last month was only a logical development of his support for political reaction at an international level.

Putin's record since 2000 has not been one of a failed attempt to establish a functioning democracy after the chaos and corruption of the 1990s.

It is a record of success in establishing an authoritarian regime which has promoted itself as a model for far-right movements and regimes round the world.

And it is a record regularly punctuated by the physical elimination of Putin's critics and opponents: the journalist Anna Politkovskaya, the anti-corruption campaigner Sergei Magnitsky, and the opposition politician Boris Nemtsov, as well as Litvinenko.

Tunisia's unemployed rise against poverty

By Dan Katz

Tunisia has been rocked by a series of major demonstrations by unemployed workers.

Protests began in the interior town of Kasserine following the death of 28 year-old Rida Yahyaoui. He was electrocuted after climbing a transmission tower in a protest after he failed to get a government job.

Action spread through the heartlands of Gafsa and Sidi Bouzid and on to the capital, Tunis, and other coastal cities.

Following Islamist terror attacks against tourist targets last summer the economic situation has worsened. There are now 700,000 un-



employed in a country of under 11 million.

The union federation, Union Générale Tunisienne du Travail (UGTT), supports the protests. They declared, "the ruling elite's

failure to achieve the hopes and expectations of Tunisians [has led to mass discontent]."

The government has used riot police and tear gas against the workers and imposed a curfew. Prime Minister Habib Essid who heads a coalition government has called for "patience". Essid says that he is concerned that Islamists might use the turmoil to their own advantage.

The events resemble the December 2010 suicide of a 23 year-old market stallholder, Mohamed Bouazizi, whose death sparked protests for jobs and democracy that spread quickly across the country and sparked the Arab Spring.

By Gemma Short

The House of Lord has taken issue with the parts of the Trade Union Bill which relate to party funding and have referred them for closer scrutiny in the committee stages.

However the Lords approved key measures which further restrict the right to strike. Overall, the Bill remains a high threat to trade union organising.

Labour peers put a motion, in the Lords which was passed by 327-234, that the bill was "not being conducted in the spirit of a report by the committee on standards in public life's report, which urged cross-party talks to get a consensus on reforming party funding."

The TUC is also claiming victory over the issue of the double threshold for key industries. Previously the government had said that ancillary staff in key industries (as well as the main staff) would be subject to a requirement of 50% minimum turn out and 40% yes vote of all members eligible to vote, in order to organise a strike.

Documents presented to the Lords have dropped the reference to ancillary staff in these industries.

This is far from winning a right to strike. We must continue urgent campaigning.

- Join Right to Strike activities during the TUC's Heart Unions week — bit.ly/rtsdayofaction
- Unite Scotland votes to back "illegal" strikes — bit.ly/1RKydjY

Set back for Trade Union Bill

Why and how to oppose Prevent

By Patrick Murphy

In February 2015 schools, local authorities and colleges in the UK became subject to something called "the Prevent duty". Under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act, this was a legal duty to "have regard to the need to protect people from being drawn into terrorism".

In this age of high-stakes monitoring and the tyranny of Ofsted, that "duty" led to frequent cases of over-anxious staff reporting perfectly innocent behaviour as if it were dangerous.

The Prevent programme itself was introduced by the last Labour government in 2006, in response to the 7/7 London bombing, and driven by the concern that atrocities were the work of "home-grown" terrorists. At the time it was part of a four-pronged anti-terrorist strategy: "Pursue, Prevent, Protect and Prepare".

In 2006 the strategy was focused exclusively on Islamist terrorism and based on the principle that there was a decisive causal link between extremist ideology and violent acts. The strategy relied heavily on funding Islamic groups seen as "moderate" and able to act as a counterweight to the "extremists".

FUNDING

In 2009 the focus narrowed to target Al Qaeda and the funding increased.

At the same time an attempt was made to widen the definition of extremism to include "promoting Sharia law or failing to condemn the killing of British soldiers in Iraq or Afghanistan", but that was quickly withdrawn.

In 2011 the Coalition government extended the definition of extremism to include non-Muslim groups, and in particular the far right. Funding was withdrawn from so-called "moderate Islamic" groups, on the not entirely unfounded basis that some of them were promoting much the same ideology as the "extremists". So-called "British values" became the litmus test for what was deemed "safe". Prevent was given a focus on protecting young people from grooming by jihadis and other extremists.

The left should unequivocally oppose everything that jihadists or far-right extremists represent. We oppose them not in a passive or abstract way; we want them stopped, caught and defeated. We want children and young people protected from efforts by such people to groom them and endanger their lives, just as we would want more and not less effort by the state to prevent child abuse, whether it is violent or sexual or through neglect.

The Prevent agenda is, however, very unpopular across mainly-Muslim communities and on the left. The National Union of Stu-

dents calls for a boycott and has produced a handbook on it. The largest teachers' union, the NUT, is likely at its conference at Easter to pass a motion which calls for Prevent to be withdrawn.

So, representatives of some of the most important groups and communities expected to make Prevent work dislike the strategy. They are right to do so.

For a start, there is no evidence that Prevent is successful in "preventing" jihadi recruitment. The number of young people travelling to Syria to join Daesh indicates the opposite.

So none of the other problems with the strategy can be excused on grounds of ends justifying means.

Muslim communities feel targeted. Until 2011 other forms of terroristic extremism went unmentioned. Even now the references to the far right appear fairly token.

Many initiatives developed as part of Prevent increase the level of surveillance in our society, by encouraging people to spy on and suspect the worst of each other, or by the misuse of local state power. Prevent funds were used to fund all the CCTV cameras in central Birmingham.

The strategy is open to political abuse. Once its approach is embedded the state can easily recalibrate it to target direct action environmentalists, anti-fascists and the labour movement.

Prevent undermines the relationships many public service workers, especially teachers, have with their communities, students and young



Prevent paid for CCTV in Birmingham

people, and thus cuts against teachers gaining trust and being able to re-educate young people tempted by terroristic ideologies.

Without doing anything significant to stop recruitment to terroristic ideologies, the Prevent strategy introduces or exacerbates a whole set of other problems. It should be withdrawn.

Socialists, however, should acknowledge that there is a real problem of jihadi-terrorist recruitment. There are useful ideas in the NUS handbook, but major weaknesses too.

Against Prevent it proposes we ally with the self-styled "human rights NGO" CAGE. Omar Raii explained the problems with that in an article in *Solidarity* 390

(www.workersliberty.org/node/25450).

NUS claims that Prevent diverts attention from "the government's own complicity in nurturing political violence due to its recent foreign policy decisions as well as its long history of colonialism" and that, by focusing on terrorism, the government is guilty of redirecting attention to "the consequences of its actions".

The logic here is that the terrorists are not really responsible for their own actions. They were made to do them by some recent foreign policy decision or by "the long history of colonialism". This view simultaneously excuses and infantilises religious fascists.

NUS dismisses what it calls "the

conveyor-belt theory", the idea that there is a decisive link between extremist ideas and acts of violence. But the evidence they cite against shows only that violence has multiple causes and that ideological predisposition is not enough on its own.

It is ironic that NUS should deny the link between the expression of reactionary ideas (extreme homophobia, misogyny, religious hatred) and the threat of violence. Too many student unions have sought to ban speakers they don't like on grounds that the ideas represent a risk to the safety of various constituencies of students. So Germaine Greer, Julie Bindel and Dapper Laughs are too dangerous to be heard, but overt jihadi-terrorist ideas have no consequences?

We should oppose the Prevent strategy for the right reasons and alongside the right allies. We should also treat the danger to children as real and serious.

Policies to deal with grooming, travel to Syria, and social media safety should be embedded in regular school safeguarding policies and training. Citizenship teaching should be reinstated in schools: it has been marginalised by government obsessions with tests, league tables, and core subjects. More primary schools should be encouraged to discuss ideas, including through the teaching of basic philosophy.

Prevent isn't necessary to do such work. It does more harm than good, by closing debate down where it should be opened up.

New blow to South Wales steel town

By Frances Jones

Over 1000 jobs will be cut at Tata steel sites across the UK, including 750 jobs at one of its largest sites in Port Talbot, South Wales. For the workforce of around 4,000, this is a devastating blow.

Port Talbot's iconic works dominate its coastal landscape. The local economy is dependent on steel production and it is estimated that for every job at Tata, another job in the wider area is supported.

There is a gloomy feeling among residents of my hometown. We're used to bad news; job cuts have become an all-too-frequent occurrence — the works employed 18,000 people in the 1960s. However, such a large job cut is more-or-less unprecedented; it may be the beginning of the end for the works.

There will now be a 45-day consultation period when it will be decided which jobs will go and at what parts of the operation. Many families are now nervously awaiting



ing a call or a meeting to find out whether or not their livelihoods will be affected.

It seems likely that redundancies will largely fall on both the younger and older generations of workers, but this will be dependent on where the bosses wish to make their cutbacks. Often, steelworkers have had a job for life and there is a very real chance that many workers who have been

there for 20 or 30 years will be made unemployed. They will have to enter a precarious job market, with Tata as their only experience to date.

Many natives of the town have close links to the works, with generations of families having worked there. People are worried about the economic effect on the area and their own families, but they're also devastated by the damage to the town's proud, working-class, industrial identity.

Workers at the site are fed up with bosses who've played a smoke and mirrors game — in recent months bosses have hinted at job-cut announcements and have exaggerated the poor financial situation at the works. Equally, they've been let down by their union — the Blairite Community Union — which, unsurprisingly, has done little to fight management on the cut. It would seem that in the current consultation, Community will only negotiate with management on which jobs will go, rather than on stopping

the cuts altogether.

The current crisis in steel has been caused mainly by Chinese "dumping" of cheap steel which steel production in the UK cannot compete with. The Tories have pretended to take action, but they've mainly hidden behind ostensibly prohibitive EU regulations. Such regulations haven't stopped countries like Germany and Italy intervening to stop job cuts. To add insult to injury, it looks likely that the navy will use non-UK sourced steel to build a fleet of new ships.

Many now see this as a fight for life, as the end of the steel works will equate to the death of the town. Political action is desperately needed to subsidise energy costs, stop dumping, enforce procurement — much cheaper actions in the short term than the potential economic depression the closure of Tata Steel Port Talbot might have on the area.

We need to save steel jobs and stop UK industry taking yet another blow while the Tories stand by.

Expropriate the banks, not go for AES!

LETTER

Dave Oisland (Solidarity 390) is right that Jeremy Corbyn's and John McDonnell's opposition to austerity is to be welcomed, and opens many more exit doors from the Thatcher-Blair-Brown-Cameron neo-liberal consensus than anything previously-established powers of the Labour Party had come up with for decades.

He is also right that Corbynomics is far from "Leninism", "all power to the Soviets", or even "socialism in the strict sense of the term, namely the dominance of social ownership of the means of production".

However, he indicates that this remoteness from socialism proper, this closeness (in contrast) to the traditions of "Very British Labourism", is a positive virtue. I dissent.

Dave does not summarise Corbynomics

beyond "an end to austerity", but suggests it connects to the Alternative Economic Strategy proposed by the Communist Party and others in the 1970s, and the ideas of Andrew Fisher in his book *The Failed Experiment*.

The cornerstone of the AES was import controls (shortly followed by simulation of a wartime siege economy, and nationalisation of some big companies). To Corbyn's and McDonnell's credit, they propose nothing like that.

Fisher's book is more a critique of neo-liberalism than a policy blueprint, but he has summarised his recommendations in three points (*Morning Star*, 1 May 2014):

- Banning profitable companies from declaring redundancies;
- Raising the minimum wage and pensions and benefits;
- A law saying that if workers in a company vote by a majority to make it a worker

cooperative, then the government buys out the owners and gives it to the workers.

None of those are in Corbynomics, other than a non-specific commitment to a living wage. The chief policies of Corbynomics are renationalising rail (bit by bit), efficient tax collection, reducing government subsidies to business, and "people's QE", putting public money into public housing and infrastructure projects.

Corbyn and McDonnell feel they must step cautiously because they have as yet no mandate from Labour Party conference, let alone the Parliamentary Labour Party, for radical policies.

But rank-and-file activists can and should still be socialists! We can and should fight to win that mandate for radical policies. We are not obliged to pretend that the limited Corbynomics measures are sufficient, let alone that the AES or Fisher's measures show the

direction they should be extended.

Both the AES and Fisher's measures would require a great mobilisation against strong capitalist resistance to push them through. In current conditions they would probably need a workers' government to implement them.

Yet, at the same time, they would not give that workers' government a real grip on the economy. The mobilisation would be for tangential, or, in the case of import controls, diversionary measures.

We should be arguing for measures like public ownership and democratic control of the banks (TUC policy, 2012) and a radical transformation of the machinery of government.

Martin Thomas, Islington

• *Solidarity* 384 carried a survey of Corbyn's and McDonnell's economic policies: www.workersliberty.org/node/25856

When print workers took on Rupert Murdoch

ON THIS DAY

By Cathy Nugent

In 1986 Murdoch, working closely with the Thatcher government, set out to smash the print unions. Knowing how Murdoch did that is essential to understanding how he became a feared and feted establishment figure.

Murdoch began his domination of media business in the UK with the acquisition of the *News of the World* in 1968, followed by the *Sun* (1969), then the *Times* and *Sunday Times* (1981).

Soon after acquiring the *Times/Sunday Times*, Murdoch pushed through major staffing cuts and a wage freeze. A year later Murdoch went for further redundancies among clerical staff.

At that time there were two main print unions, the National Graphical Association (NGA) and the Society of Graphical and Allied Trades (SOGAT). Printers in Fleet Street, then the base of the national press, were vilified as "overpaid". But during the post-war boom newspapers were happy to see wages rise — it was a way of putting pressure on each other as competitors.

The print unions in Fleet Street had established a degree of workers' control. They won and maintained a "closed shop" (100% unionised labour in production areas). They were confident enough to stop the newspapers in support of other workers. During the miners' strike the *Sun*'s printworkers successfully stopped the publication of a front page with the headline "Mine Führer" and a picture of miners' leader Arthur Scargill ostensibly giving a Nazi salute (he was waving to someone).

Murdoch was not the first to attack the print unions. In 1983 newspaper entrepreneur Eddie Shah decided to expand from his Stockport base into Bury and Warrington, bypassing the NGA at his company and recruiting non-union labour. After NGA members walked out in Stockport they were sacked.

Solidarity (secondary) picketting organised by the NGA was declared illegal under new Tory anti-union legislation. Mass picketing followed, leading to the union being fined. NGA members in London's Fleet Street walked out. On 29 November a mass picket



was broken up by riot police.

After dithering, the TUC decided not to back the NGA and the workers were defeated. Shah made a single-union agreement with Eric Hammond of the Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunications and Plumbing Union (EETPU). The same pattern would be repeated at Wapping.

For Murdoch, borrowing heavily to expand his American business, replacing outdated technology and increasing profits in his UK Fleet Street operations was imperative. Under capitalism, workers are always vulnerable to their labour being replaced by the introduction of more efficient machines, but it is not inevitable that they will be "thrown on the scrap heap" and not benefit from labour-saving technology. The way to ensure that technology benefits workers is to fight for such things as a shorter working week with no loss of pay.

Murdoch's plan from the start was to move all his titles and operations to Wapping, to derecognise the unions in the process, and to sack all the workers if they showed any resistance.

While Wapping was being built and equipped, Murdoch invented an entirely fictitious plan to produce a new paper, the *London Post*, at the plant. In September 1985 he told the unions that he would not negotiate on terms and conditions at Wapping for his older titles until an agreement was reached on terms for the *London Post*.

But in September 1985 news broke (via *Socialist Worker*) that, with the help of the EETPU in Southampton, News International

was recruiting scab labour to work at Wapping.

Murdoch's terms and conditions for the fictitious *London Post* were: no union recognition; no "closed shop"; complete flexibility of working; new technology to be introduced at anytime followed by job cuts; the company's right to manage. The union leaders carried on negotiating even though it was now clear that Murdoch was out to smash the unions.

In January 1986 a ballot was held by NGA and SOGAT, returning big majorities for strike action. But on 23 January *Sun* journalists, bribed with £2,000 per head, voted by 100 to 8 to transfer to Wapping. *Times* and *Sunday Times* journalists would follow. Journalists eventually lost union recognition at the Murdoch press.

FRIDAY 24 JANUARY

At 6.40pm on Friday 24 January the strike began. Twenty minutes later, as striking staff were escorted off the Fleet Street premises, they were given a letter saying "Your employment has ended, your P45 and any money due will follow shortly."

Murdoch had everything ready to roll at Wapping and the high-walled, barbed wire surrounded plant was always going to be difficult to picket. Crucially, drivers employed by TNT were used to transport printed papers, and they were told by their union, the TGWU, as it faced a High Court injunction against secondary action, to cross the picket line.

Many activists got involved in the strike, but the rank-and-file had little or no control

over negotiations. The idea of a strike committee was not discussed in SOGAT until September, was opposed by middle ranking officials, and voted against.

The far left, trade unionists and Labour Party members turned out in force for the mass Wednesday and Saturday night pickets at Wapping as well as specially organised marches during the year. Support groups were set up.

As in the 1984-85 miners' strike, the police were mobilised to break the printworkers, and they deployed all their weapons: riot police, mounted police, arbitrary arrests and trumped up charges. Such was their overwhelming presence that the Wapping area became a mini-police state. But Wapping residents organised solidarity and protests about the police behaviour. And pickets were a place for the left and labour movement to congregate and, as in any major class struggle, to discuss political ideas.

In March SOGAT's assets were sequestered and the union was fined £25,000 for instructing its members in wholesale distribution not to handle Murdoch's newspapers. From then on SOGAT leader Brenda Dean focused on doing what she had to do to get back control of the funds — i.e. selling out the dispute.

What was really needed was escalation of the industrial action — by other print workers on other newspapers. Union members in democratic decision-making meetings called for such an escalation. But it did not happen. Instead, the union relied on a completely ineffective consumer boycott campaign.

In October, when Murdoch sent individual "pay off" offers to strikers, the unions, slow to respond, did not stop many individuals from taking the money.

In January 1987 Brenda Dean agreed to a deal with News International. In return for some "compensation" already voted against, the company would not take further action in the courts against SOGAT. The national executive called off the strike. The NGA was forced to follow.

Rupert Murdoch and his ilk remain what they have always been, people who bring insecurity and misery into the lives of working-class families; they are for screwing the workers and, if it helps them sell newspapers, screwing the rest of the world too.



The EU leaders' mean-spirited response to the refugee influx is creating new barriers within Europe

EU's limited unity is at risk

The European Union — the optimistically titled “ever closer union” — is under great strain.

After the collapse of European Stalinism in 1989-91, the EU had a run of success, and expanded to 28 states, with up to 10 more waiting to join. Drunk with capitalist triumphalism, the EU's leaders did little to develop democratic and political capacity to cope with challenges.

And since 2009-10 they have damaged the fabric of European unity by insisting that “unity” means uniform neo-liberal policies

Let them all in!

Europe's refugee “crisis” could be solved easily. Let them all in! Wealthy Europe could easily welcome several million refugees and integrate them into its 500-million-plus population.

All those who need to come to the EU should be provided with a safe passage out of the Middle East and African war zones, and an adequate living in Europe.

Instead, European governments are increasingly resorting to reintroducing border controls between EU states, attacking migrants at flashpoints such as Calais, and trying to seal the EU's external borders.

The EU leaders' miserable response to the refugee crisis is a danger to Europe and to the limited easing of borders and barriers achieved over the last century. The refugees are not.

The USA's population, not counting Native Americans, was about 15 million in 1836. Over 30 million people, twice as many as that previous population, moved to the USA between 1836 and 1914. In 1907, 1.3 mil-

lion migrants arrived, to add to a population then about 80 million.

That migration, relatively free until World War One, made the USA dynamic, prosperous, and culturally enriched.

In the years after 1944, about 12 million refugees, people of German descent expelled from central and Eastern Europe, arrived in West Germany, which then had a population of 40-odd million. Settling them was difficult because the country was war-shattered and the Allies were removing industrial equipment as war reparations.

But the result of that migration was the German “economic miracle” of the 1950s and 60s.

Europe can and should welcome many millions of refugees.

Among Europe's major governments, the worst, the most mean-spirited and narrow-minded, has been Britain's. Up to September 2015, Britain had granted asylum to fewer than 6000 refugees.

Let them all in! Now!

We do not want barriers between countries in Europe to be raised high again. In the referendum we will campaign for the UK to stay in and for unity with workers across Europe to win democracy, reduced barriers between countries, and social “levelling-up” across Europe.

Some socialists, including the SWP, SP and *Morning Star*, pretend that success for nationalists in the coming EU referendum — which is what Brexit will represent — can benefit workers or boost the prospects for socialism. That is nonsense.

Even under capitalism, voluntary European unity is better than high barriers between countries. It is progress compared to centuries of elite feuding, wars, and nationalism.

At the social and economic level, Europe is the rational arena in which to develop the economies of the European countries, and begin to level up conditions for working-class people across Europe and further afield; to organise industrial and agricultural production to benefit the whole human race, as well as to protect the environment on which we all depend.

The EU's lower borders make it easier for people to travel or to move countries in search of a better job and a better life. Literally, they allow Europe's 500-plus million people to find new ways to speak to each other.

The undemocratic arrogance and neo-liberal short-sightedness of the EU's capitalist leaders threatens all those gains.

Our alternative: workers' solidarity: discussion, joint trade union action, common political initiatives across the EU to make its institutions more democratic and to create Europe-wide alternatives to the ruling-class elite.

• Workers' Europe campaign:
www.facebook.com/ForAWorkersEurope

Defend the Heathrow 13!

Thirteen climate activists from the campaigning organisation Plane Stupid, who shut down a runway at Heathrow Airport in July 2015, have been found guilty of aggravated trespass.

They have been told that it is “almost inevitable” that they will be given prison sentences. The Heathrow 13 will be sentenced on 24 February.

In her statement, the judge stated that the thirteen were all people of integrity, who had been acting out of genuine, moral convictions, but she justified her ruling on the basis that they had cost Heathrow an “astronomical” amount as a result of 25 cancelled flights and heightened security since the action.

NECESSARY

The thirteen argued that the pressing threat of climate change and air pollution had made their actions necessary.

A statement they released following their conviction read: “the legal system does not yet recognise that climate defence is not an offence.

“When the democratic and legislative processes have failed, it takes the actions of ordinary people to change them”.

The protestors face three months in prison under the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994. The law was brought in during a period when the media were whipping up public outrage at illegal raves. Over recent years the charge of aggravated trespass has been increasingly used to arrest and convict protestors.

This is said to be the first time that protestors convicted of aggravated trespass will have been given prison sentences.

This ruling represents new precedent in the criminalisation of protest and confirmation of the fact that our criminal justice system serves to protect the profits of big business, over ordinary people in the overwhelming majority. The labour movement must mobilise to defend the Heathrow 13!



By Martin Thomas

Capitalism has created life-enhancing possibilities. It has even realised some of them.

My older daughter has epilepsy. In pre-capitalist times, if she'd had medication at all, it would have had no, or harmful, effects, and the seizures would probably have become more severe until they disabled and killed her.

Today, she has been able to end the seizures with just a few pills, without side-effects.

Not only in Britain, but in many poorer countries too, almost everyone learns to read and write, almost everyone has easy access to music and visual arts, a sizeable proportion can study at university.

Most jobs are cleaner, quieter, and require less physical strength than they or their equivalents used to. Food, clothing, and housing sufficient for all can be produced by maybe 20% of the total labour-time of society, while previous societies required almost all society's labour-time to produce a scantier minimum.

At the same time that capitalism, by advancing technology, creates those possibilities, it also stunts and warps them. It diminishes and threatens human life. And in some respects the stunting, warping, diminishing, threatening increases.

ENVIRONMENT

Capitalism threatens human life through global warming. Capitalism has given rise to technologies which, with judicious development and use, could reduce carbon emissions and save the environment.

Yet in recent years most energy investment has gone not into improving and cheapening renewables or nuclear power, but into "extreme", high-carbon-emission, extraction of oil and gas: oil sands, shale oil, hydraulic fracturing. That offers the best profits in the short term. And capitalism puts profit before life.

Other industrial emissions into the atmosphere threaten life. In the UK, 60,000 people die early each year because of such pollutants as nitrogen dioxide; world-wide, 3.3 million. London went above its safe limit for that air pollution over the whole of 2016 as early as 8 January this year.

Corporations like Volkswagen, in pursuit of profit, have the technology to limit the emissions, but also have also used technology so that vehicles observe the limits only in

The number of people who die early due to pollutants, in the UK alone, each year.

60,000

Capitalism vs h



test conditions and spew out 70 times as much pollution in actual use.

Emissions into the atmosphere threaten everyone, rich as well as poor. But capitalism also works to diminish and shorten the lives of the worse-off and favour the lives of the rich.

In Britain, people in well-off areas can expect to live much longer than people in poor areas. And they can expect to live in good general health, free of permanent limiting ailments, 20 years longer.

In the poorest areas, on average you live to 52 without permanent limiting ailments. 52! Remember, the government wants to raise the state pension age to 70.

In well-off areas, on average you live to 71 without permanent limiting ailments.

Defenders of capitalism say that its inequalities are necessary to make it dynamic — by way of the striving generated by the competitive "rat race" — and benefit even the poorest, because we get pulled up along with, although behind, the rich.

Yet, once economic life has reached the level that basic necessities can be produced by a small proportion of the available labour-time, and so almost no-one starves or freezes to death through sheer shortage, the evidence is that inequality, or relative poverty, is the major stunting factor.

Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, in their book *The Spirit Level*, show that among

the more prosperous capitalist countries, a composite index of health and social problems shows much worse levels in the most unequal countries (USA, Portugal, UK) and better levels in the less unequal (Scandinavia, Japan).

The correlation with the country's inequality of incomes is high. The correlation with the country's absolute level of average income is low or zero.

The same pattern — high correlation with inequality, little or no correlation with absolute income level (within the relevant range) — is shown by comparisons between states in the USA.

CHILDREN

Children's well-being is better in less unequal countries, worse in more unequal countries, largely uncorrelated with absolute income level.

People's levels of confidence that they can trust neighbours and workmates are higher in less unequal countries, lower in more unequal, but by no means necessarily higher in countries with higher average incomes.

Rates of mental illness are much higher in more unequal countries; so are murder rates, and rates of imprisonment.

In the abstract, a highly unequal society could still give better chances for an individual from a worse-off family background to rise high, and a less unequal society could

rate low for that "social mobility". In fact, the more unequal countries also have less social mobility.

Exactly why being much worse-off than the other side of the tracks is more blighting than low income as such (above a certain minimum level), we don't know. The fact is a fact. It is also a fact, documented in detail by Thomas Piketty in his book *Capital in the 21st Century*, that inequality, and the dominance of incomes from property, has been and is rising steadily across the most developed capitalist countries.

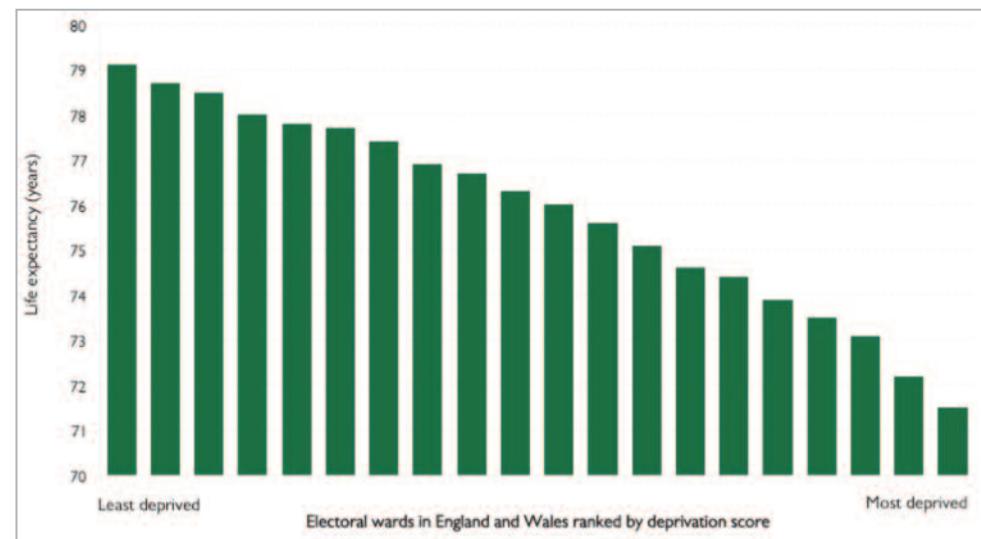
Despite crashes like 2008, on the whole capitalism tends to increase production. On the whole people get more smartphones, iPads, PCs, etc. than they used to. But simultaneously capitalism increases inequality and



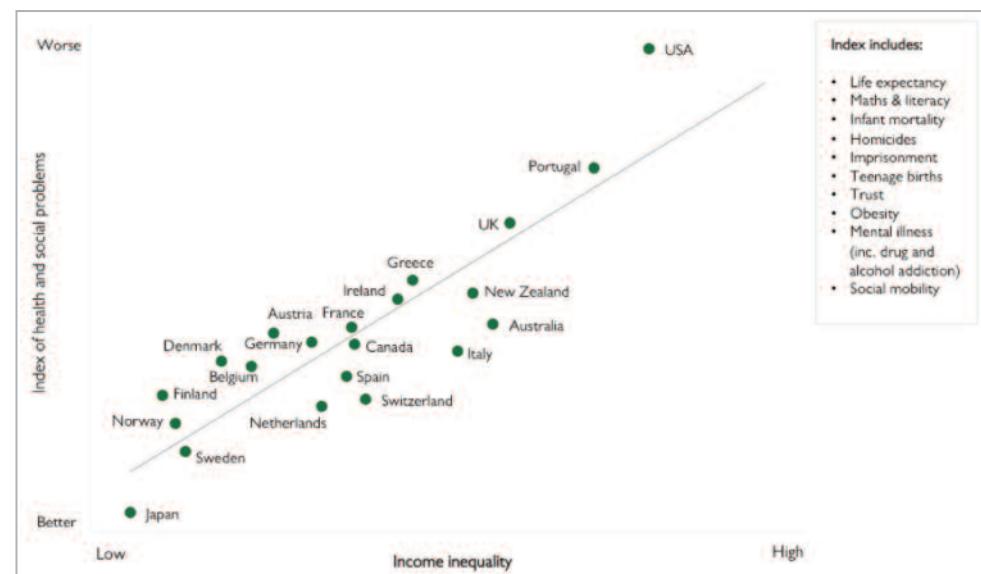
In South Korea, which has the highest suicide rate in the world, people were encouraged to spend time in a coffin to contemplate how their family would feel if they died.

human life

Health is much more correlated to income differences *within* rich societies than to those *between* them



Health and social problems are worse in more unequal countries



its blight on life.

Some of the elements of inequality's blight we know. Being overstressed; frustrated; isolated; "alienated" in the sense that your creative abilities are appropriated, manipulated, and abused by others for alien purposes, diminishes your resilience, and eventually your physical health.

Not all stress is unhealthy. Complete languor is not the ideal. Hard work is not necessarily unhealthy. Marx, while strenuously avoiding detailed blueprints of the future cooperative commonwealth, described the expansion of free time, as against enforced drudgery, as its cardinal feature. Yet by "free time" he didn't just mean idling. "Really free activity, e.g. composing music, is at the same time precisely the most damned seriousness, the most intense exertion".

While the demands on physical strength of many jobs have been eased, they have been made more harmfully stressful by the way they are organised.

Sometimes this involves long and arbitrarily-imposed hours. Generally, as Michael

Marmot, a researcher in this field, notes:

"Stress at work is not simply a matter of having too much to do, but also results from too little control over the work, and from insufficient reward for the effort expended". ("Insufficient reward" means not just low wages, but lack of satisfaction in having done something useful, lack of appreciation from others).

"The way work is organised is crucial. The way to address the problem of stress at work is to look hard at the organisation of the workplace".

Capitalists look hard at the organisation of the workplace — but with the priority of exerting more control and squeezing out more profits, thus increasing stress.

School teachers are rated by the Health and Safety Executive as the most overstressed trade, with a suicide rate 40% above the average. Most of that is due to arbitrary, often educationally counterproductive, impositions by school management. Those impositions are constantly increasing, and driven not by direct profit-seeking but by an imper-

20%

How many more years of life free from long-term disabling illness you can expect if you live in a rich area, compared to a poor area.

20 years

The percentage of society's total labour-time needed to make food, clothing and housing sufficient for all.

ative to imitate competitive profit-seeking norms.

There is much talk about "executive stress". Some managers, especially middle managers, are overstressed. Usually the highest levels of stress are not at the top of the heap but at the bottom. The trades with the highest levels of suicides are teachers, cleaners, construction workers, health workers, not top managers.

In schools, students may well be more unhealthily stressed than the teachers — not because they are working hard at learning, which may be healthy, but because of petty school discipline and arbitrary and often irrational impositions from a competitive exam system.

In 2015 I spent a lot of time on a 24/7 picket line run by Brisbane dockworkers fighting sackings. New technologies have created the basis for making dock work much less life-sapping. Dock work now involves little heavy manual labour. Container terminals are quiet and clean.

Yet the dockworkers smoke much more than Australia's average (low by world standards). A doctor told me why: shift workers, especially shift workers with shifts that change constantly, smoke more than others. Although nurses know the dangers of smoking better than others, they smoke more because of the shifts they work.

Those dockworkers are unhealthily stressed, despite the technical advances, because of the capitalist way the work is organised, with round-the-clock and unpredictable shifts, and arbitrary sackings.

OVERWORK

In one of the most technically-advanced capitalist economies, Japan, since the 1970s "karoshi", death through overwork, has become an officially recognised condition.

Each year, hundreds of families, on an increasing trend, win compensation because a family member is officially certified to have died from overwork. Yet the compensation is from the government, not the employer!

Since the late 1980s, "karojisatsu", suicide from overwork, has also been officially recognised, with similar compensation. Overwork, in this context, means not just long hours, but "frustration", "psychological burdens", "lack of job control", etc.

The difference in other capitalist countries is only that "karoshi" and "karojisatsu" are

not officially recognised.

A poignant finding from research in 2002 shows that people who become convinced that they will end up lonely suffer damage to their complex-reasoning abilities. Their simple information-processing capacities are not damaged. Expectation of future physical injuries does not damage their complex-reasoning abilities. But the conviction that they will end up lonely does.

And for many it is a well-grounded conviction. In Britain, 11% of all elderly people say that they talk with a neighbour, a friend, or a relative — someone they are connected with in a human way, rather than through market transactions or official procedures — less than once a month. Once a month! Millions of less extreme cases are achingly lonely.

In an 1845 book, Engels wrote about how capitalism had atomised people in a way unknown to all previous societies. In the big capitalist cities, people "crowd by one another as though they had nothing in common, nothing to do with one another... [with] brutal indifference... unfeeling isolation of each in his private interest... This isolation of the individual, this narrow self-seeking, is the fundamental principle of our society everywhere, [and] it is nowhere so shamelessly barefaced, so self-conscious as just here in the crowding of the great city".

Capitalism has generated the possibilities of privacy, of "a room of one's own", of having "time to oneself", of choosing a path in life radically different from one's parents and neighbours. Those possibilities are progress compared to the conformity and narrow horizons imposed by many pre-capitalist communities.

But capitalism also perverts those possibilities into enforced isolation and loneliness, and not only for the elderly. At the same time, the atomised nuclear-family households of modern capitalism create an imposed "togetherness" for young children, frequently over-supervised by their parents.

Capitalism is creating grand possibilities, but simultaneously stifling, blighting, and threatening human life. The choice for each one of us is passively to accept the stifling and blighting, and try to create a niche of relative contentment within it; or actively to take part in the collective struggle for collective democratic control over our economic life.

Orthodox Trotskyism reshaped Trotsky's ideas

By Ed Maltby

Paul Le Blanc's review of *The Two Trotskyisms Confront Stalinism: Fate of the Russian Revolution volume 2 (Solidarity 388)* is a thoughtful and detailed piece.

Le Blanc defends *The Two Trotskyisms* against some on the left who deride the book as pointless obsessing over long-ago spats. He is right to do it: such complaints remind one of Homer Simpson, who, warned that he's late for English class, sneers "Pff! English, who needs that? I'm never going to England!"

The truth is that the two *Fate of the Russian Revolution* books are about the Trotskyist movement as it is right now. They are not just scholarly works about distant, long-ago arguments — they trace the development of patterns of thought and behaviour that shape how our movement thinks and works today. In particular, they look at the development of what Workers' Liberty has called "apparatus Marxism".

Le Blanc focuses his review on the 1940s dispute over the class character of the USSR, and weighing the merits of "Third Camp", views that see the USSR as a new form of class society, be it capitalist or something else, against the "Orthodox" view of the USSR as still a "workers' state", albeit degenerated.

Le Blanc's deals with the subject matter in a tone of ecumenical and scholarly tact. But there can be no mistaking that he means to defend Cannon against Shachtman, and enlists "state-capitalist" theorist Tony Cliff to help him out. For Le Blanc, Cannon's approach — which is to say, Trotsky's approach — "continues to have much to recommend it". And whereas the survival of the Cannon group vindicates Cannon's ideas, the disintegration of the Shachtman group (and Shachtman's personal rightward lurch in later life) offer proof of the weakness of the "Third Camp" tradition.

The first thing to reply to Le Blanc, and this is a key theme of the book, is this: Cannon's 1940s politics on the "degenerated workers' state" were not the same as Trotsky's 1939-40 politics. Cannon travelled, in less than a year after Trotsky's death, far from Trotsky's position.

Le Blanc accepts Matgamma's contention that "Trotsky constantly rethought, reconceptualised, readjusted his thinking on the USSR" through the 1930s, but he says this process of analysis "culminated" in Trotsky's book, *The Revolution Betrayed*, written in 1935-6 and published in spring 1937. But Trotsky's 1937 book was far from his final word.

After its publication Trotsky continued to shift his emphasis, contradict his previous writings, and speculate as to whether or not the USSR should be considered a new form of class society. In an April 1939 article Trotsky urgently raised the slogan of an independent Ukraine. He pointed to, but refused to draw, the logical conclusion: that the USSR's behaviour in Ukraine should be called imperialist. In his September 1939 article *The USSR in War*, Trotsky remarked that to give the USSR bureaucracy the label of a new ruling class would be a "purely verbal" change. The distance between Trotsky's view and the view of the Soviet bureaucracy as a new class, was narrowing.

Trotsky resisted taking the final step. Why? It seems that foremost in Trotsky's mind was this: when the expected crisis of the Soviet regime came, the Trotskyists in Russia must be ready to lead the fight against capitalist restoration, and turn this into a struggle for workers' power. They must not say, "a plague on both your houses — bureaucrat



Stalin represented an imperialist interest as much as Roosevelt and Churchill did; orthodox Trotskyism did not recognise that.

and capitalist alike". He resisted any theoretical expression that might lull the Trotskyists into sectarian abstention from an expected struggle. Calling the USSR a new class society might be reasonable in theory, but it might be premature and it might encourage dangerous conclusions.

Trotsky's concerns, and his method, were rooted in the changing situation of 1939, and his attempt to chart a course for the global revolutionary movement through the hard months before as he saw, new choices were bound to emerge.

After Trotsky died (on 21 August 1940), the Cannon leadership flash-froze his writings into a dogma, and in so doing changed their dynamic, content, and meaning.

For Cannon, and for the majority of the post-Trotsky Trotskyist movement, "defence of the Soviet Union" changed from a perspective that assumed the imminent collapse of the USSR, into a timeless moral obligation on socialists to laud the sole characteristic that gave Stalin's regime (otherwise described by Trotsky as differing from fascism "only in its more unbridled savagery") its "proletarian character", that is, nationalised industry.

LABEL

As the Stalinist system confounded Trotsky's predictions by surviving the war and spread across the world, the label "degenerated" or "deformed" workers' state came to be given to any state, at any time, whose leadership paid sufficient lip-service to the October Revolution and/or nationalised the economy.

As Shachtman commented, this changed Lenin's slogan from "Soviets plus electrification equals socialism" to "totalitarian prison for the workers plus nationalised property equals a degenerated workers' state". The key protagonist in this view of the world ceased to be the working class, but had become the institution of nationalised property — a progressive force regardless of who brought it into being or defended it, be they Gadaffi, Castro, Mao, Tito, or even the Syrian Ba'thists and the Burmese junta. All would find themselves feted by "Orthodox" Trotskyists at some point in the post-war period and declared candidates for "unconditional defence". The gulf that separates the Orthodox and Heterodox Trotskyists is substantial, but it is not a boundary separating Trotsky's position and something else; it is between

two strands that both departed from Trotsky's positions of the 1930s because new events made those positions inoperable.

Cannon's departure from Trotsky's positions defined "Trotskyism" for generations of revolutionaries. And not only in terms of his theory of nationalised property. The cultural shift in Cannon's SWP also provided the model for the internal regime of most post-Trotsky Trotskyist organisations.

Trotsky, had always accepted that if reality changed, so should the parameters of rational socialist debate. In 1934, he had written that "denying the proletarian character of the USSR is incompatible with membership in the Bolshevik-Leninists" (*No compromise on the Russian question*, 11 November 1934). But in 1939, after observing five years of subsequent developments, he would call it "a piece of monstrous nonsense to split with comrades who on the question of the sociological nature of the USSR have an opinion different from ours, insofar as they solidarise with us in regard to the political tasks."

When Trotsky died, Cannon built his leadership around the prestige of being Trotsky's legatee — rather as Peter, foremost disciple to Jesus, would become the first Pope. The tone was set by Cannon's bizarre (and unsuccessful) bid to have Trotsky's remains flown to New York for a memorial meeting held by the American group, the Socialist Workers' Party. The prestige of the Cannon leadership required that Trotsky's writings be turned from the living documents into a source of scriptural authority, to be quoted from in order to support this or that position held by the leadership.

In 1945, Felix Morrow summed up the changes: "Trotsky created an atmosphere of free exchange of ideas, of hospitality to attempts to find what is new in a situation... After his death, however, the Political Committee majority tended... to create a very different kind of atmosphere." From here on in, as Matgamma puts it, "Marxism as a process of scientific investigation had come to an end". Insistence on the literal truth of all Trotsky's predictions and formulas became a "matter of principle".

In November 1945, Cannon would declare that only "careless thinkers" could believe that the Second World War had ended; and he and his allies would defend that statement when challenged, rather than admitting it was an extravagance. Reconstruction of Europe using American money was declared "a

theoretical impossibility", as was the re-establishment of parliamentary democracies. This was a different form of reasoning to what had come before, and a worse one.

Le Blanc gives us an example of this kind of "Orthodox" reasoning when he quotes Cliff against Shachtman: "If the Stalinist regime denotes the decline of civilization, the reactionary negation of capitalism, then it is of course more reactionary than the latter. Capitalism has to be defended from Stalinist barbarism". Le Blanc summarises Cliff's view: "Partisans of the state-capitalist theory, no less than those of the degenerated workers state perspective, have seen bureaucratic-collectivism as facilitating a fatal accommodation between would-be Marxist revolutionaries and actually-existing capitalism."

There are, I think, three problems with this line of attack against Shachtman. The first is that Cliff is effectively saying that a line of enquiry should be rejected if it threatens to produce conclusions that clash with one's existing prejudices. Saying "X can't be true: it's heretical!" is a good way of defending orthodoxy — but it is a poor way of figuring out the truth.

Secondly, as Le Blanc in fact acknowledges, it does not follow that if you think that the USSR is an exploitative class society, more reactionary than capitalism, you must become a supporter of the capitalist camp. On the other hand, Cliff in the 1940s saw the USSR's "state capitalism" as a higher form of capitalism, and more historically progressive than what existed in the west. Cliff was accommodating to the prevailing orthodoxy (a stance which the tendency he founded has since replaced by a "more-anti-Stalinist" one, but never officially revised). But does this mean that Cliff saw himself as on the side of the USSR as the "more progressive" camp?

The third problem is, weren't the Stalinist societies *in fact* more reactionary than capitalism? Were they not "worse" from a working-class point of view? Without exception, Stalinist societies liquidated the workers' movement, reducing it to semi-slavery and destroying its basic organisations, which are the prerequisite for socialist culture and workers' power.

SURVIVAL

What about the indisputable fact that whereas the Cannon group survived until the 1980s (when it formally repudiated Trotskyism as it understood it), the Shachtman group fell apart?

I think the short answer to this is that a doctrine which helps an organisation achieve success is not necessarily the same thing as a doctrine which is founded in truth or reason.

The 1950s were a period of McCarthyite reaction and small-c conservatism in the US labour movement. They were also a period of massive Stalinist expansion. The immense success of the USSR drew many of the world's rebels, from national liberation movements to leftwing intellectuals of different stripes, into the orbit of the Soviet sphere. Sometimes these new satellites were more or less reluctant, like Jean-Paul Sartre. But whatever the misgivings, it was undeniable that the major antagonist of western capitalist imperialism in the postwar period was the Soviet Union with its colonies and clones. Unwillingly, and with many misgivings and a more honourable record than most, the Cannon tendency was drawn into this orbit. And that sustained them politically.

If you could view the expansion of the Stalinist system as in some sense a vindication of revolutionary politics, or a source of hope, then regardless of whatever criticisms you

might make of it (and Cannon's criticisms were trenchant and heartfelt), then that provided you with a morale-bolstering illusion. However bad things were at home: internationally, the "conquests of October" were on the march!

Moreover, SWP-USA had an internal regime which was that of a sect. But it also had the positive features of a sect — it inspired sacrifice and devotion which kept the group together. Eventually, the internal regime would, by Cannon's own account, "strangle the party", when a new "Castroite" leadership emerged around Jack Barnes. Cannon denounced the "strangling" in advance, but he had provided Barnes with the tools he needed.

The Shachtman current did not have such sheltering illusions, and, for both good and ill, they lacked the sectish character of the Cannon group. Their view of Stalinist rule as an expansion of anti-working-class slavery was accurate, but also profoundly demoralising. That it also swam against the stream of almost all left opinion produced difficulties. They were mistaken, perhaps understandably so, in their prediction that Stalinism was on the way to replace capitalism world-wide led Shachtman to back US imperialism against USSR imperialism. But Shachtman one of only a few of the leading figures in the Workers' Party-ISL tendency taking that path. Most simply assimilated into the social democracy, often without clearly repudiating their revolutionary views.

Shachtman's "fall" — his decision in 1962 to more-or-less support the CIA-sponsored invasion of Cuba — is often used as a cautionary tale to warn off the curious. He made a fatal political mistake, probably born of profound demoralisation and exhaustion. But he didn't abandon the camp of the working class. He became a left-wing fixer in the Socialist Party, later in the Democratic Party, and in the Civil Rights movement. Not the renegade of popular legend, and in some ways substantially to the left of, say, Corbyn.

Moreover, as Matgamma points out, Shachtman "took up a relationship to US capitalism paralleling that of the Cannonites to Stalinism". The Cannonites also made a big concession to imperialism — Soviet imperialism — and as early as 1941. In the Second World War, the Cannonite paper, *The Militant*, would reproduce material lifted from Stalinist propaganda outlets, and declare that Russian expansion across Eastern Europe would herald revolutions. Why should this loss of political independence count for less than Shachtman's?

To the end of his life Cannon remained a working-class revolutionary. He saw himself, and was, a revolutionary opponent of Stalinism. But the doctrine that he taught relied on Stalinism as, at some level, the carrier of the fortunes of revolution. It would be translated into many different dialects throughout the history of "Orthodox" post-Trotsky Trotskyism, some much cruder than others.

But the political edifice, the method that Cannon produced, and the style of organisation — where a heresy-hunting atmosphere propped up the authority of leaderships said to be in sole possession of the truth — has been a blight on the Trotskyist movement.

Le Blanc says that Cannon's approach has much to recommend it: I find it hard to agree. The dogma of "degenerated" and "deformed" workers' states seems today to be as much a freakish historical aberration as the social systems to which it was an ideological satellite: conceived in error, and maintained for reasons of sect prestige.

Adaptations of it remain — the Cliffite groups around the world, for example, have much the same relation to hard-right political Islam as the Orthodox once had to the Soviet Union — but the theory itself has surely definitively failed the test of history.

This is really a book about now

Ed Strauss reviews *The Two Trotskyisms Confront Stalinism*

The book is an amazing textbook. As a young student in the 1950s, I was reading some of the documents which are in the collection, I was coming in at the tail-end of some of these debates; but we had nothing like this. We could read a few older documents, but we didn't have much published in book form.

I was in the Young Socialist League [YSL], the youth group linked to the Independent Socialist League of Max Shachtman and Hal Draper, in 1954-1958. By that time, the ISL had pretty much given up on recruiting, but the YSL was still recruiting.

There were still a lot of debates and discussions between the Orthodox and Third Camp Trotskyists, but not much real exchange. The matter was considered settled, though there were still polemics between the two points of view.

In 1958, for example, it looked like there would be a war over Taiwan. The SWP [USA, no relation to the SWP-UK] had the idea that China was some kind of workers' state and that Taiwan was just an agency of imperialism. They saw China as an anti-imperialist force, as if imperialism was only on one side, as if there are not in fact several imperialisms.

The book presents the material in such a way as to show the whole dialogue between the two sides — crudely, between Shachtman and Cannon — as it developed and, through the critical years, the development of the ideas of bureaucratic collectivism and the Third Camp theories. It keeps track, not just of Trotskyism, but of Marxism, of socialism. It covers a very key moment in the whole history of socialism.

The book is beautiful because it shows you the evolution of the growing debates and divergences, chapter after chapter. It's almost alive, in the way it develops. And it continued to develop until Shachtman stopped being Shachtman, politically, and the ISL broke up at the end of the 1950s.

Even then, core people like the Jacobsons and Hal Draper kept going. From 1964 there was the Independent Socialist Clubs. Even people like Michael Harrington didn't fol-

low Shachtman down his particular path when they went into the Socialist Party.

Some people say: why are you publishing all this old, obscure stuff? But the issues here are not old, obscure stuff!

Back then, the Soviet Union was still a great totalitarian power and the world looked rather different. But now again there is controversy between the Third-Camp, genuine-socialist, side, and the so-called anti-imperialist camp, who in fact still are grouped around Russia, although it no longer even pretends to be socialist, and is overtly socially reactionary as well as authoritarian.

Attitudes to Syria, Iran, Cuba, and China are shaped in the same way. You don't want to say anything bad about Iran, because it might feed the warmongers. In fact, the so-called "socialist camp" is still there. Quite broad layers of the left want to hold back with their criticisms for fear of feeding the Western warmongers or the Tories. Some don't even want to criticise the trade union leadership too harshly, because that might feed the Tories.

SOCIALISM

This book gives us material to think about what socialism really is.

Is it like it is in Venezuela, or at least was until the oil money ran out? Socialism has become a word that populists or reformists use, or even sometimes fascists, to mean just doling out some cash for a time. This discussion is really important for our current situation, with the Corbyn movement.

This is really a book about now. It's not a book about then. I appreciate this book more now that I would have done then, in the 1950s. As Hal Draper had it, what's at stake here is the genuine soul of socialism.

I am particularly impressed by the introduction to this volume by Sean Matgamma. It's a book in itself. The introduction deals with the question of why, in spite of their superior ideas, the Third Camp socialists didn't last the course.

The whole American left was under tremendous pressure in the 1950s. We'd had McCarthyism, and there was fear about. The Stalinists were still recruiting.

The Orthodox Trotskyists, the SWP-USA, had a couple of splits in the 1950s, the Martycites and the Cochranites. But the SWP had a living homeland, a living alternative. They had a place where their ideal had to some extent been fulfilled, the degenerated or deformed workers' states..

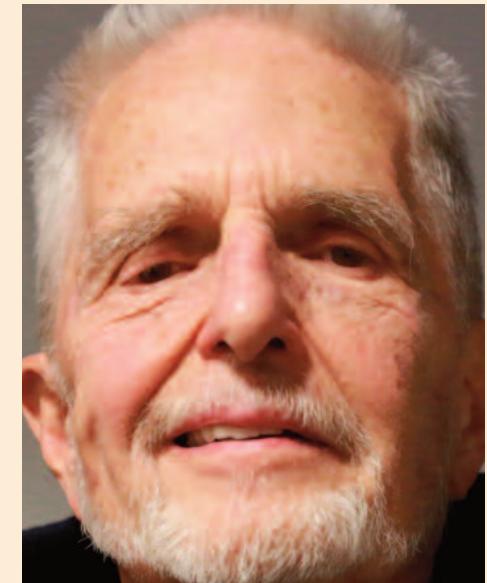
We were Trotskyists, we supported uprisings, we supported workers' power wherever it demonstrated itself, but it was suppressed by all the forces of established power.

The SWP had another thing going for them. There was a kind of "anti-anti-Communism" growing up in the States, amongst the liberal, "progressive" left. Criticism of Russia or China might "aid the American warmongers", so you don't want to have too much discussion of the repression on that side.

And we were talking about repression on both sides! So we came in for a lot of criticism. We advocated the alternative of workers' power from below. There was no kind of first-campism, no adherence to the pro-US camp, on our side at that time.

By then we were a much weaker force than the SWP, in terms of money and so on. There was a definite continuity, but it was weak.

The SWP were able to re-float through the



Current Workers' Liberty activist Ed Strauss was in the YSL in the 1950s

movement for "Hands Off Cuba" after the 1959 revolution. We said "Hands Off Cuba" too, but not because we supported the Castro regime.

Then the whole American Left mobilised around the Vietnam war and almost everyone seemed to support the Vietnamese Stalinists — "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh". The Orthodox were saying, this is a real socialist revolution going on in Vietnam, in a deformed way. And then they could associate themselves with it.

We were against America's pursuit of the war; but we refused to pretend that some happy socialist dreamland was going to come.

The introduction traces the debates over the nature of the Soviet Union from the 1930s to the 1950s, culminating in the rejection of the idea that Stalin's USSR was any kind of workers' state. There was no element of workers' control or workers' democracy, there was no possibility of creating workers' liberty.

If it's just a matter of nationalised industry, then, well, capitalist states were nationalising industry. That didn't make a workers' state, because there was no kind of workers' control. These were slave states. The "deformed workers' states", as the Stalinist states outside the USSR came to be called — what were they? States which deformed workers?

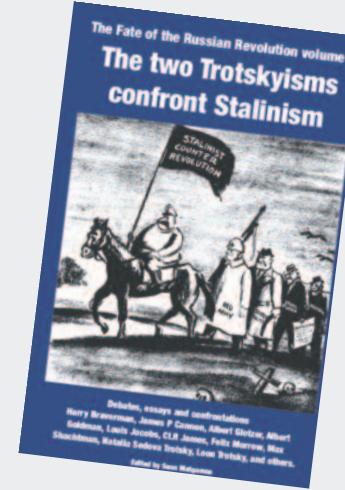
Why did the Soviet Union collapse? I don't think it's that the theory of bureaucratic collectivism was wrong. On its own terms, for the bureaucrats, the system of total suppression and control of all communications was a fine way to run a state for themselves. It is just that they were outpaced by the other imperialism. The American had more power, more money and so on. And then everything happened so rapidly, with a big bang where so much was sold off to oligarchs overnight. Free markets were introduced, and like before the workers were given no say or consideration.

The introduction also shows that the problem with the Orthodox Trotskyists wasn't just the degenerated workers' state line, but their idea of organisation — their idea of what they called "Leninist" party discipline, meaning an ultra-centralised leadership having total control. We objected that workers needed a democratic organisation.

No liberty without socialism, no socialism without liberty: that was one of our slogans, and continues to be today.

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Where we stand

Today one class, the working class, lives by selling its labour power to another, the capitalist class, which owns the means of production.

The capitalists' control over the economy and their relentless drive to increase their wealth causes poverty, unemployment, the blighting of lives by overwork, imperialism, the destruction of the environment and much else.

Against the accumulated wealth and power of the capitalists, the working class must unite to struggle against capitalist power in the workplace and in wider society.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty wants socialist revolution: collective ownership of industry and services, workers' control, and a democracy much fuller than the present system, with elected representatives recallable at any time and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

We fight for trade unions and the Labour Party to break with "social partnership" with the bosses and to militantly assert working-class interests.

In workplaces, trade unions, and Labour organisations; among students; in local campaigns; on the left and in wider political alliances we stand for:

- Independent working-class representation in politics.
- A workers' government, based on and accountable to the labour movement.
- A workers' charter of trade union rights — to organise, to strike, to picket effectively, and to take solidarity action.
- Taxation of the rich to fund decent public services, homes, education and jobs for all.
- A workers' movement that fights all forms of oppression.

Full equality for women, and social provision to free women from domestic labour. For reproductive justice: free abortion on demand; the right to choose when and whether to have children. Full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Black and white workers' unity against racism.

- Open borders.
- Global solidarity against global capital — workers everywhere have more in common with each other than with their capitalist or Stalinist rulers.
- Democracy at every level of society, from the smallest workplace or community to global social organisation.
- Equal rights for all nations, against imperialists and predators big and small.
- Maximum left unity in action, and openness in debate.

If you agree with us, please take some copies of *Solidarity* to sell — and join us!



Events

Saturday 30 January

Health Campaigns Together Conference
10.30am, London Welsh Centre, WC1X 8UE
bit.ly/NHSconf

Saturday 30 January

Oppose Nazis in Dover
12 noon, Dover town square
bit.ly/nonazisdover

Saturday 30 January

March against the Housing Bill
12 noon, Kennington Road / Lambeth Road, London, SE1 6HZ
bit.ly/housingdemo

Wednesday 10 February

Junior doctors' strike and student nurses walk-out
Across the country, pickets at all main hospitals
bit.ly/NHSwalkout

Thursday 11 February

Trade Union Bill day of action
Events across the country
bit.ly/rtsdayofaction

Saturday 27 February

Stop Trident National Demonstration
12 noon, London
bit.ly/stoptrident

27-28 February

Young Labour Conference
Scarborough
www.younglabour.org.uk

Saturday 6 March

Stop Turkey's war on the Kurds!
Break the silence! National demonstration
1pm, Trafalgar Square, London
bit.ly/kurdishdemo

Got an event you want listing?
Email solidarity@workersliberty.org

More online at www.workersliberty.org @workersliberty

Labour activists support junior doctors

LABOUR

Pete Radcliff, a Labour Party activist in Beeston, Nottingham (Broxtowe CLP) reports

Normally when we do a Labour Party stall for my branch, we get on average half a dozen people over an hour or two. If we have a petition, and do well, we might get a hundred signatures.

We had a stall on Saturday 23 January in support of the junior doctors, for about two and half hours. We had on average 20 people there, about 30 involved in total. We got 700 signatures!

Our local Tory MP [Broxtowe is a marginal seat], cabinet minister Anna Soubry, refused to meet a delegation in advance that would have been led by one of our doctors. Soubry initially wrote that she believed the Labour Party was behind the petitioning and delegation and it wasn't "normal" to meet Labour Party constituents. When she was emailed, she said it was a stunt — although she did say she would meet on another occasion with our dele-



gation. Let's see!

Our Labour Party has now built a very good relationship with local junior doctors. Some in the local Labour left, even, have argued that mobilising the party in support of the doctors was not the right focus. I think this shows how wrong they were!

I hope other local Labour Parties will try to do the same sort of thing.

- For a Momentum NHS model motion on how local Labour Parties can support the doctors' dispute and the wider fight to save the NHS, see bit.ly/NHSmotion.

Social media group Red Labour sabotaged

By Ralph Peters

The left-wing group Red Labour, which specialises in use of social media, Facebook and Twitter, has been sabotaged in an astonishingly undemocratic way.

Red Labour began in 2011 as a modest Facebook page. Over the following years it demonstrated the way that social media might be used to get out news to those on the left of the Labour Party. They used videos, memes and factual information to counter right wing arguments.

The Red Labour national Facebook page gathered 31,000 supporters and a similar number followed their Twitter account. Alongside it were many local pages, forwarding and adding to these national messages.

When Red Labour was started, the left in the Party was disorganised and weak. The success it had in building an online following provided significant proof that the public were still responsive to a broad anti-austerity agenda. Many senior figures in the Party acknowledged Red Labour's contribution to Jeremy Corbyn's success in the leadership election.

But on 19 January, in an act of outrageous vandalism, the Red Labour Facebook page was hijacked, temporarily closed down, and taken over. The Twitter account was similarly taken over. It is not known at the time of this paper going to press who was responsible for this vandalism. The saboteurs have chosen to keep their identities secret.

It is possible that the person or

persons responsible may have had some minor role in the beginning of Red Labour, but contributed little in recent times or during the Party leadership election. Whoever they are, they never voiced any alternative proposals about how it should be run within the organisers' group that decided Red Labour's policies and output.

In effect someone has overruled without discussion the overwhelming majority of Red Labour organisers, stolen the Red Labour page, and sabotaged the hard work of many comrades over several years.

The policy of the hijackers became clear when they reopened the now fraudulent Red Labour page a few days later, exclusively in their control. In their first statement they accuse Red Labour of a list of charges, including having become a rump controlled by Workers' Liberty.

Out of the nearly one hundred Red Labour organisers, only two or three were connected with Workers' Liberty. None of the "admins" of Red Labour had more relationship with Workers' Liberty than any other left winger activist or Corbyn supporter in the Party.

However, Red Labour had taken a leading role in campaigning against the witch-hunting of campaigning bodies of socialists like Workers' Liberty.

The nonsense about Red Labour being controlled by Workers' Liberty has been combined with fairly crude attempts to "finger" Workers' Liberty members to people on the right who have been trying to get organised. Needless to say these tweets have been readily retweeted by a host of right-

wingers.
This hijacking has done some temporary damage to one of the left wing's most effective social media facilities. But the hijacker(s), if they ever do reveal themselves, are going nowhere.
As the true facts become known and after the initial confusion, they will be widely shunned by the left in the Party.

• Red Labour have re-established new social media accounts and all socialists who use social media should make sure to switch over from following the former one to the new ones: facebook.com/RedLabour2016 and twitter.com/Redlabour2016

Student Nurses national week of action 8-14 February

Student nurses across the country will be holding a national week of action to protest at the removal of NHS bursaries for healthcare students and in support of junior doctors. The week will include a one hour walk-out on Wednesday 10 February.

bit.ly/NHSwalkout

Rail: fight pensions sell-out!

By Gareth Davenport

Workers at the UK's train operating companies are facing a huge attack on their pensions due to government legislation that ends the contracting-out of the Second State Pension.

The legislation means higher National Insurance contributions for both employees (1.4%) and employers (3.4%). The government has also passed legislation to help employers out with this — by allowing them to carry out annual raids on occupational pensions schemes, without even having to consult with scheme trustees.

You might think rail unions would mount a robust defence against any attempts by industry employers to use the new legislation to attack pension rights, but it seems not. All four rail unions (Aslef, RMT, TSSA and Unite) have voluntarily entered into a deal affecting almost all members of the Railways Pensions Scheme who were employed after 4 November 1993.

This "deal" worsens pension rights in two main ways:

The normal retirement age (the age at which you can retire and claim your full pensions rights) has been pushed back from 60 to 62.

Any increases in pensionable pay from April 2016 will be subject to a cap of RPI + 0.25% for benefits already earned (pensionable pay can still rise by more than that but will



only count going forward from the effective date of the pay review). This includes "cost of living" increases and any increases in pay brought about by stepping up in grade (i.e. from Customer Service to Train Guard or Train Guard to Driver).

So retirements have been pushed two years further away (unless workers are prepared to accept a reduction) and pensionable pay is no longer linked to final salary at the point of retirement but is based on "career average" earnings.

Unions seem to be arguing that this "protects" all staff across the industry from having the pensions plundered annually by employers, whereas if the issue was dealt with on an employer-by-employer basis some employers would agree to

comparatively reasonable settlements — like Eurostar, who have absorbed the 3.4% increase while staff will have to foot the bill for their 1.4% — whereas workers with some companies would lose far more than this.

It appears that the leaderships of the unions have looked at the graveness of the situation and botched on the fightback, and are so scared of the reaction of members to this "deal" that they have decided not to risk consulting them.

It is not inherently wrong to, as the phrase goes, "pick your battles" (although this is a battle we should "pick"!).

It is, however, outrageous to take such a hugely important decision out of the hands of the people it affects.



Students occupied the Cass Institute in December

Save London Met Uni

By Gemma Short

UCU members at London Metropolitan University are being balloted for strikes over cuts.

London Metropolitan university has been struck by a series of financial crises in the past five years, culminating in several waves of cuts. Last year Unison members at the university fought to stop redundancies of support staff, including their branch secretary.

As part of the current package of cuts the University plans to close several of its city campuses, including the Cass Institute for the Arts which students occupied in protest in December.

The cuts will also result in the loss of 93 staff posts, with no guarantee of no compulsory redundancies.

Recycling workers to strike

By Harry Davies

Further to the report in Solidarity 390, GMB members at the Sheffield Green Company recycling operation are being balloted for strikes from Saturday 16 January.

GMB organiser Peter Davies described management as a "set of bullies" who were damaging the company. The ongoing story of the recycling industry disputes in

Sheffield is one of victimisation of workers and union activists, of exploitation and allegations of corruption.

This struggle exposes a range of appalling practices and of unsafe and degrading conditions inflicted on staff who have continually stressed that their priority is to the community and to the efficient running of their workplace.

Something that, like all organised workers, they know best how to do.

100 Sheffield steel jobs to go

By Peggy Carter

Up to 100 jobs could be at risk at Sheffield steel company Forgemasters.

Forgemasters has started consultations with workers on the loss of up to 100 jobs, just days after Tata Steel cut 1,050 jobs at its plant in Port Talbot, south Wales.

Forgemasters, which employs 700 workers, says it will also be consulting on changes to workers' contracts as part of a "company turnaround" to deal with the crisis in the steel industry.

On 21 November last year hundreds of steel workers and other



trade unionists attended a "save our steel" march in Sheffield, but as yet none of the unions organising steel workers have organised industrial action against the job losses.

Local Government pay "offer"

By Peggy Carter

Unison is consulting its members in local government after they were offered a 1% "pay rise" for each of the next two years.

Last year Unison agreed to a deal that left most members stuck in a

2014-16 two year pay deal of less than they were originally offered before they struck for a better deal.

Unison is recommending a rejection of the pay offer for 2016-18, which is good. But members must push to make sure strikes are called, and that the Unison leadership does not call them off for a bad deal again.

Tube unions suspend strikes

By Ollie Moore

A strike planned by London Underground (LU) workers on 27 January will not go ahead, after the four unions involved suspended their action.

LU management have offered unions a deal on pay, terms, and conditions, which includes arrangements for running a 24-hour service on certain lines at weekends ("Night Tube"). The four-year deal promises a 1% pay increase in the first year, plus a £500 one-off payment. The company has also committed to trialling a four-day week for drivers on the Jubilee Line, facilitated by compressing their existing working hours into four days. Officials from the drivers' union Aslef say they will recommend that their members accept the deal.

The deal also requires unions to accept LU's "Fit for the Future" cuts programme on stations, which involves hundreds of job losses, displacements, forced regrading, and the imposition of new rosters and working arrangements for station staff.

A mass meeting of reps and activists from the RMT, the largest union on the Tube, discussed the deal on Monday 25 January, and while an overwhelming majority

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The course is jointly taught by academics, ILO and trade union experts. It runs over eight weeks (3 March – 27 April) and is free with the option of upgrading to a certificate track which costs €49; the certificate recognised by the Global Labour University and Penn State University. All you need to take part is internet access!

Register: bit.ly/globalrights



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TORY HOUSING SCANDAL

By Miles Kerin

On Tuesday 12 January, a Labour amendment to the Housing Bill, which would have ensured that all rented accommodation was suitable for living in, was defeated in the House of Commons by 312 votes to 219.

Local Government Minister, Marcus Jones, said the amendment would cause "unnecessary regulation and cost to landlords". Tories don't think landlords should be obliged to repair mouldy, damaged, unsafe or otherwise unsuitable housing. This was just the latest example of Tory promotion of cut-throat landlordism.

But 39% of Conservative MPs are landlords themselves! That includes David Cameron, who has made half a million in the last five years from renting. A total of 196 MPs rent out one property or more. Councillors are often in on the act too. It is not unknown for property developers to offer fancy lunches and expenses in exchange for Town Hall co-operation.

Other amendments to the Bill include setting a limit of five years occupancy for new council tenants, and allowing property developers to process building schemes through a private company rather than the local council. All in keeping with other provisions in the Bill: for example, a couple earning £30,000 together (i.e. both on just above minimum wage) will have their council rents increased to market rates, and councils will be forced to sell "high value" council properties.

Many amendments to the Bill were voted on in the House of Commons on 5 January at 2am, when most MPs were in bed. And, as Shadow housing minister John



Healey pointed out, an extra 50 pages of amendments were added at the last minute, making an already complicated bill more so.

Architects for Social Housing estimate over 50,000 families, upwards of 150,000 people, have been forcibly evicted from inner-London boroughs in the last three years. Some have moved to outer boroughs, but most out of the city altogether. Social tenants face a worrying time. (Whilst London is bloated with luxury apartments for the super-rich, over 50% of UK social housing is in London). In

addition to the Housing Bill, the recent Adonis Report has suggested 3,500 housing estates in London — housing over a million people — be reclassified as brown-

field sites, to facilitate their "redevelopment".

Huge cuts in local government finances also mean many cash-strapped councils are willing to take do land deals with property developers where a council-owned housing estate is knocked down, with a promise that whilst expensive flats will be built, there will be "some" affordable accommodation built for renting or for first time buyers. But the percentage of "affordable" and "rented" is haggled down by the developer.

In any case, "affordable" accommodation at 80% of market rates is still unaffordable for most who want to rent, and those looking to buy cannot afford the deposit.

In addition affordable accom-

modation is often built outside of new developments so that new apartment owners don't bump into any of the proles who used to live there.

For example, Grosvenor's new housing development, Neo Bankside, will consist of over 200 apartments being sold from £1.25 million to £20 million each. The developers paid Southwark Council £11 million, but only agreed to build the required quota of affordable housing off the developed site. The only place Southwark Council could afford to develop social housing was on other council-owned land, and so it demolished a children's home and a day nursery to build the affordable housing. Other estates under im-

minent threat include the Lower Falinge estate in Rochdale, and Broadwater Farm in Tottenham.

Cameron has now promised a paltry £140 million scheme to build new affordable houses for first time buyers, with affordable defined as £450,000 — well out of the reach for most would-be first-time buyers, let alone current renters. In 2014, a person looking to buy a house, earning the national average wage of £26,500 a year, would find 91% of properties in England and Wales beyond their means. Someone on the minimum wage of £14,000 a year would find 99% of properties in England and Wales beyond their means (bit.ly/1EBgeHH).

We don't need more so-called "affordable" properties. We need more council housing! We need a nationalised banking system, which controls interest rates on mortgages unrelated to stock market speculation. We should use the wealth of the banks, and increased taxation of the rich, to fund a mass building program of council houses with fair rents and secure tenancies. Homelessness should not be a lottery for the diminishing council stock, but the target of intense government redress. Private landlords who refuse to make their houses suitable for living, including prompt repairs when needed, should be banned from letting. All private landlords should subject to rent caps. Councils should be granted powers to seize empty properties which are being used as investment.

These are policies we need to fight for, in our union branches and Labour Parties, on housing demonstrations, and in community campaigns. The future of social housing is at stake.

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